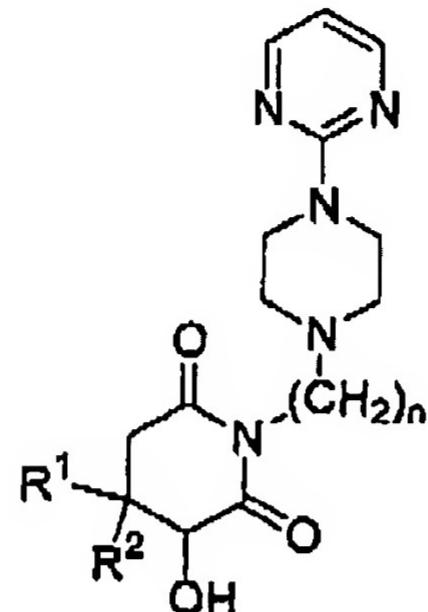


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Amendments to the claims

1. (currently amended) A process for preparing a hydroxyazapirones of Formula I,



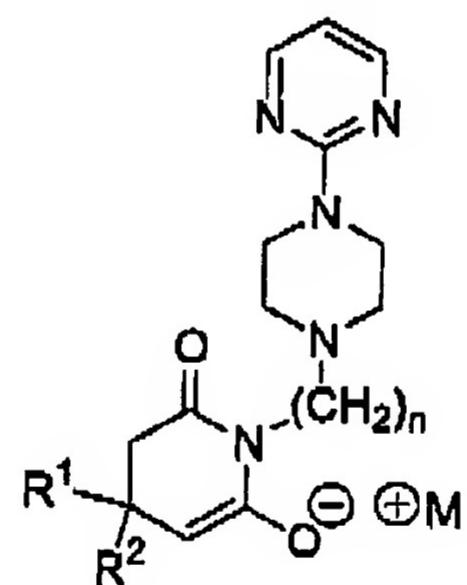
I

wherein

 R^1 and R^2 are independently hydrogen, C₁₋₆alkyl, or R^1 and R^2 taken together are $-CH_2(CH_2)_{0-5}CH_2-$, and

n is an integer from 2 to 5,

comprising reacting a compound of Formula III



III

wherein M^+ is an alkali or alkaline-earth metal cation

with molecular oxygen in the presence of a reductant to provide a Formula I product.

2. (original) The process of claim 1 wherein the source of molecular oxygen is air or oxygen gas.

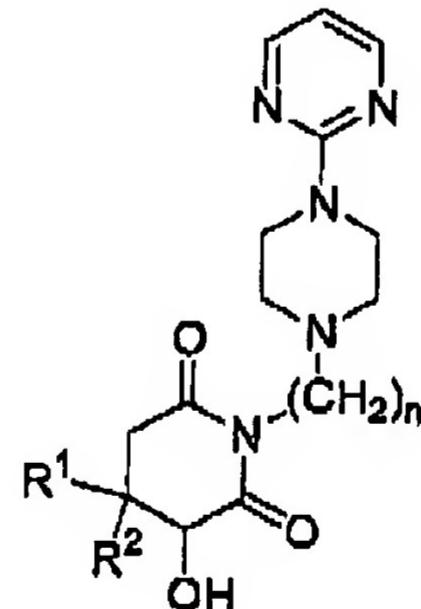
3. (original) The process of claim 1 wherein the reductant is selected from the group consisting of triarylphosphites, trialkyl- and triaryl phosphines, thiourea, sodium borohydride, copper (II)

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chloride with iron (II) sulfate, iron (III) chloride, titanium isopropoxide, dimethyl sulfide, diethyldisulfide, sodium sulfite, sodium thiosulfate, zinc and acetic acid, and 1-propene.

4. (original) The process of claim 1 wherein the reductant is tri(C₁₋₈)alkylphosphite.
5. (original) The process of claim 4 wherein the reductant is triethyl phosphite.
6. (original) The process of claim 1 where R¹ and R² are independently selected from hydrogen and C₁₋₆alkyl.
7. (original) The process of claim 6 where R¹ and R² are methyl and n is 4.
8. (original) The process of claim 1 where R¹ and R² taken together are -CH₂(CH₂)₀₋₅CH₂-.
9. (original) The process of claim 8 where R¹ and R² taken together are -CH₂CH₂CH₂CH₂- and n is 4.
10. (currently amended) A process for preparing a hydroxyazapirones of Formula I,



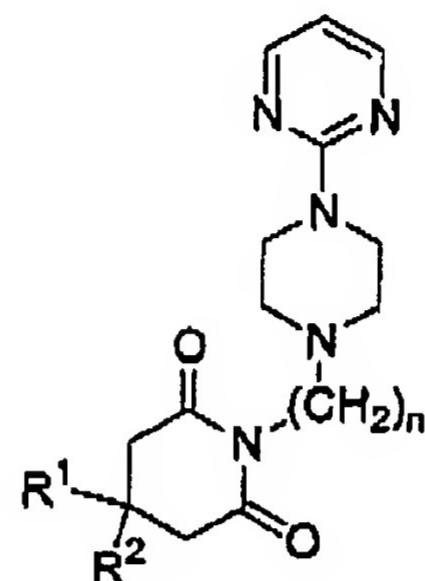
I

wherein

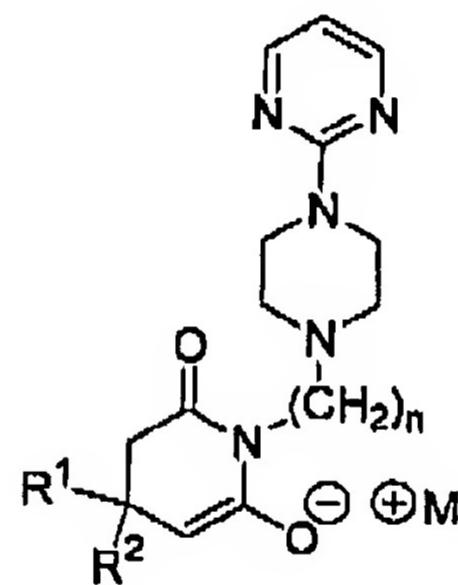
R¹ and R² are independently hydrogen, C₁₋₆alkyl, or where
R¹ and R² taken together are -CH₂(CH₂)₀₋₅CH₂-, and
n is an integer from 2 to 5,

comprising

(a) reacting an azapirone compound of Formula II



with a strong base to form an intermediate imide enolate anion of Formula III where M^{\oplus} is an alkali earth metal; and



(b) reacting the imide enolate III with molecular oxygen in the presence of a reductant.

11. (original) The process of claim 10 wherein the source of molecular oxygen is air or oxygen gas.
12. (original) The process of claim 10 wherein the strong base is selected from the group consisting of lithium bis(trimethylsilyl)amide, sodium bis(trimethylsilyl)amide, potassium bis(trimethylsilyl)amide, lithium dialkylamide, sodium dialkylamide, potassium dialkylamide,

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sodamide, lithium alkoxide, sodium alkoxide, potassium alkoxide, lithium hydride, sodium hydride, and potassium hydride.

13. (original) The process of claim 12 wherein the base is sodium bis(trimethylsilyl)amide.

14. (original) The process of claim 10 wherein the imide enolate anion III formation is maximized by the use of spectroscopy to monitor conversion of II to III.

15. (original) The process of claim 14 wherein IR spectroscopy is used to monitor conversion of II to III.

16. (original) The process of claim 10 wherein the reductant is selected from the group consisting of triarylphosphites, trialkyl- and triaryl phosphines, thiourea, sodium borohydride, copper (II) chloride with iron (II) sulfate, iron (III) chloride, titanium isopropoxide, dimethyl sulfide, diethyldisulfide, sodium sulfite, sodium thiosulfate, zinc and acetic acid, and 1-propene.

17. (original) The process of claim 10 wherein the reductant is tri(C₁₋₈)alkylphosphite.

18. (original) The process of claim 17 wherein the reductant is triethyl phosphite.

19. (original) The process of claim 1 where R¹ and R² are independently selected from hydrogen and C₁₋₆alkyl.

20. (original) The process of claim 19 where R¹ and R² are methyl and n is 4.

21. (original) The process of claim 10 where R¹ and R² taken together are -CH₂(CH₂)₀₋₅CH₂-.

22. (original) The process of claim 21 where R1 and R2 taken together are -CH₂CH₂CH₂CH₂- and n is 4.